2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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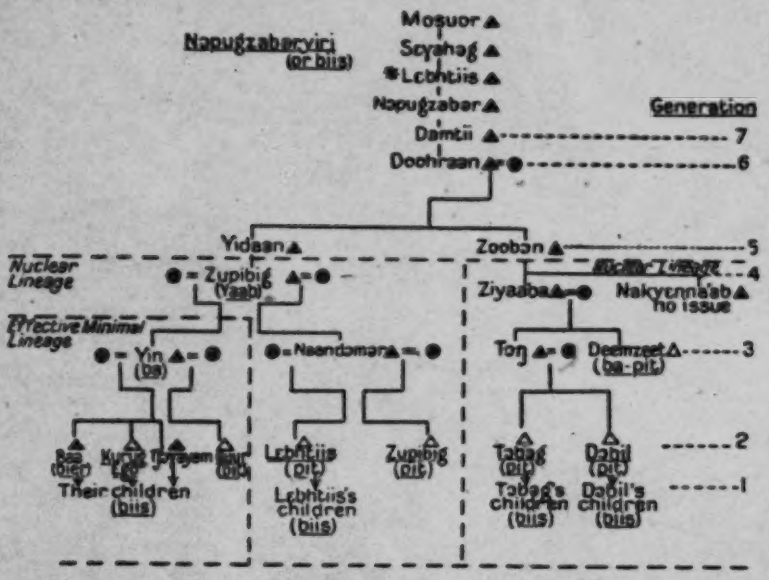
6/3 Deemzeet's house (*yir*) has the following genealogical relationship to Zupibig yidɑm:



Taken by itself, Deemzeet's house has the same internal structure as Kurug's or Lebhtiis's; but Tobag and Dobil are men of mature years with grown children. Though still formally under the jural, economic, and ritual authority of Deemzeet, they have considerable autonomy in ritual, jural, and economic affairs that concern their own segment (Ton biis) of the nuclear lineage. If Deemzeet, a timid old bachelor, had any children, [589] the relative independence of Ton biis would be more obvious. The nuclear lineage of which Deemzeet is head has reached a more advanced phase of internal differentiation than that of which Kurug is head. This is due, partly, to its being an older lineage, which existed in its present form when Kurug and Guur were still minors under the tutelage of their own father, Yin, and Lebhtiis and Zupibig (II) were minors dependent on their father, Naandomor. But Deemzeet's house is not the older lineage in the sense that its members are older than the members of the lineages with which we are contrasting it; it is older in that it represents an earlier phase of the segmentation of the inclusive lineage of which Kurug's house, Lebhtiis's house, and Deemzeet's house to-day form the constituent and co-ordinate segments. Its head is a generation superior to Kurug and Lebhtiis in terms of their common descent. Thus it is the senior of the two segments. The span of a lineage being a function of its internal genealogical constitution, a three-generation lineage has a wider span than a two-generation lineage. But the order of a lineage is determined by its segmentary relationship to other lineages which are complementary to it—brother (*nimɔ*) segments—in a greater, inclusive

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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Within the joint family, though its members maintain a very intimate association with one another, make free of one anothers' possessions, and go freely in and out of every woman's quarters, each woman and her children are ensured a certain amount of privacy in their own *dug*. Husband and wife form a precisely distinguished unit. They have complete privacy in their sexual relations and a great deal of privacy in other relations. It would be the grossest breach of manners for anyone but their own infant child to intrude on a man and his wife in their own sleeping-room.

In their own home, therefore, a family has much privacy. A man can confide in his wife or his son things that he does not want others to know about—things about his debts, his property, or his ritual possessions. He can talk over with them problems concerning the household or matters of public import. There are ritual activities, such as sacrifices to a medicine shrine, in which only a man and his sons or the members of the joint family share. Sometimes such domestic secrets have to be divulged, especially after a man's death. It may be necessary to clear up a question of a debt he owed or to carry out special rites for one of his medicine shrines. But until then they are usually faithfully guarded. The Talaŋa can keep his own counsel if need be.

The Significance of Marriage[1]

As the preceding chapters suggest, Tale domestic relations do not remain perpetually fixed. They change and develop with the years. At one time the ties of economic co-operation, of reciprocal sentiment and mutual loyalties, of reciprocal and shared rights and duties, are uppermost; at another the underlying cleavages and competing interests push through. This appears very clearly in the relations of husband and wife, the central pillar of the domestic organization. We shall discuss the marital relationship in some detail, for it is a nodal relationship in Tale social life. It is not only the starting-point of the family, but the starting-point of the kinship ties that run across and between genealogically independent clans and lineages. Through marriage the mutually exclusive corporate units of Tale society become interlaced with one another.

The Tallensi regard marriage as the normal state of life for every adult. They cannot conceive of anyone voluntarily refraining from marriage throughout life. There is something wrong, by native standards, with men and women who never marry; and they are few. In the whole of Tongo I knew only five men who had never been married and who would, according to common belief, never marry. One was obviously mentally defective; another was an invert; two were said to be so ugly that no woman would accept them, but both were also definitely unbalanced and eccentric; and the last was a gentle old man, who, it was

[1] A preliminary account of Tale marriage customs is given in my pamphlet, *Marriage Law among the Tallensi*, Government Press, Gold Coast, 1935.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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581 •589 said, had never had the enterprise to find a wife. I heard of no woman who had never married. Deformities which do not wholly incapacitate a person or arouse repulsion are not a bar to marriage. The blind, the deaf, and the lame find spouses if they are otherwise able-bodied and presentable.

Tallensi attach immense importance to marriage, not only because it is the sole means to the most ardently desired of all ends, the procreation of legitimate children, but also because no man or woman can adequately satisfy all his or her wants or lead a normal social life, after reaching maturity, without a spouse. Sooner or later a man must have a wife and a woman a husband. Hence 'finding a wife (*poya booga*)' is the most urgent preoccupation of unmarried men, apart from getting a living. Among unmarried young men it is an obsession, the most absorbing pursuit of their leisure and an interminable topic of conversation. A girl's life is entirely directed towards marriage from childhood onwards.

581 181 It is a common thing to find a group of men discussing the relative importance of farms and wives, the two basic practical interests of the natives. They seldom fail to come down to the fundamentals. I have heard an elder sum it up somewhat in this fashion: 'If you don't farm you will have no food; and if you have no food you die. Then what is the use of a wife without food? But if you have no wife you will have no children and your life is wasted.' In the end, however, it is usually agreed that farming is the more important, for the man who lives long enough will not lack a wife and without food one cannot support a family.

556 Land and wives have many features in common, as their juxtaposition in native thought shows. Both stand for the fulfilment of fundamental social needs. Both come under the jurisdiction of the lineage, though they are of direct service to individuals. But there are certain differences which show the special importance of wives. There is no intense competition for the possession of land. Owing to technical and economic limitations there is no inducement to accumulate land. Wealth—that is, property acquired by saving, or in exchange for surplus grain or cash—consists pre-eminently of livestock; and the use to which livestock is principally put is in acquiring wives, performing sacrifices, celebrating funerals, and, to a much lesser extent, competing for certain politico-ritual offices. Such wealth is, therefore, really equivalent to provision for delayed consumption or special forms of consumption arising out of ritual obligations or differences in status.[1] It has no durable productive value. Compared with livestock, the purchase of farm-land is insignificant

[1] But Tale standards of wealth are extremely low. Except for a handful of chiefs and headmen—who have herds of cattle numbering from 20 to 50, and, in at least one case, apparently, over 100, as well as numbers of small stock—a man with a dozen sheep, a few goats, and three or four head of cattle is considered to be wealthy (*bondaan*).